



A typical diary for a profoundly deaf child aged ten

A diary explaining the extra help and attention your child needs on a typical day can be useful supporting evidence for your child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claim.

We've created this diary as an example to give you ideas of what you could include in your own diary.

It's very important that you write your own diary and don't just copy from our example.

7.30am

Matthew needs to be woken up as he can't hear the alarm, he needs someone to keep going in to make sure that he gets out of bed. This takes 30 minutes. His younger sister can be woken up by calling her from downstairs, which is much less time consuming.

8.00am

Matthew has breakfast. He needs someone to explain to him what's been happening in the news. He needs them to follow the rules of good communication to make sure that he's looking at them and that their speech is clear and unambiguous. While the news is generally subtitled, not every item is.

8.30am

The telephone rings, Matthew can't hear it ring, he needs someone to interpret what was said and needs to be told who it was and what was discussed. Saying 'It wasn't important' is not sufficient as hearing children are able to hear what was being said. Matthew wants to be part of the family and so wants to know what is happening. Deaf children need the same access to information otherwise they are left out of the family unit.

9.00am

I take Matthew to school and he asks a lot of questions in the car on the way. In response I need to take my eyes off the road, as he needs eye contact to communicate. As a result the only time I can speak to him is at traffic lights and queues, or if I pull over to the side of the road.

9.15am

We arrive at school. It's Matthew's first day at his new school and I need to take him to his class, as he isn't able to ask people where to go.

3.30pm

I pick Matthew up and he tells me about his day. For this he needs me to maintain eye contact with him. Then we park the car. As the car park is on the other side of the road from the shops he needs someone to watch him to make sure that he doesn't get run over when crossing the road, as he is unable to hear oncoming traffic. He also needs watching on the pavements, as he can't hear anything approaching from behind, such as cyclists or runners.

3.45pm

We go shopping for food or toys, Matthew has difficulty in explaining what he wants to the shop assistant and needs me to facilitate communication so that he is able to say exactly what he wants. Shop assistants often ignore him because they can't understand him, making him feel more isolated and unconfident.

4.00pm

We go into a newsagent. Matthew needs support to select reading material. He often finds it difficult to decide what to buy because he has difficulty understanding written English. This is because his reading skills are delayed as a result of his deafness. Also when we buy new computer software, he needs someone to make sure that all information is visual as well as audio.

4.10pm

We go to the supermarket and Matthew asks me many questions relating to the various products on display. He needs me to explain what they are, how they're used and what the labels say. This lengthens our shopping time considerably.

6.00pm

We get home and there's a letter for him. He needs someone to read this with him and to explain what it says.

6.15pm

I prepare dinner before the rest of the family comes home. Matthew watches TV and asks me a lot of related questions and I need to pause in my food preparation to answer. Also the phone rings a few times and Matthew needs someone to explain to him who is on the line and what was discussed.

7.30pm

Dinner time. There are five of us and Matthew is the only deaf member of the family. Everyone wants to talk about their day, Matthew finds it very hard to follow conversation in a group, he needs the person speaking to indicate and to wait until he is looking at them before they speak. He also needs someone to explain to him what they were saying, or alternatively everyone needs to speak to each other in such a way that Matthew understands. This slows the pace of conversation, which is frustrating for Matthew. Matthew needs his family to adapt to his communication needs, to make sure that he understands what's going on. If we discuss something that is new to him, then he needs us to provide some background information.

8.30pm

Matthew does his homework and needs his father to help, not with the actual work, but to explain new concepts and their meanings. Also Matthew has not understood what the teacher wants from the work as she was facing the blackboard when she explained it. Sometimes Matthew needs us to phone one of his friends from school to help explain what the homework is.

9.00pm

Matthew goes to bed and we, his parents, talk to him before he goes to sleep. He asks several questions and we answer them. It's necessary to do this now as he can't fire off questions from upstairs and likewise, we can't reply from downstairs; he needs us to be in the same room as him.

10.30pm

A police car roars past, with sirens blaring and lights flashing into Matthew's room. This wakes him and he calls out. Matthew can't hear us calling to him from another room so needs us to go into his room to reassure him that everything is fine.